

## Developing Sudanese secondary schools students' reading skill

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### Abstract:

*This study tries to focus on developing Sudanese secondary schools students reading skill as well as to recommend and suggest some useful methods. The researcher adopted a descriptive, analytical method to analyze this study. Data has been calculated statistically using SPSS program. A questionnaire is distributed to secondary schools teachers in White Nile State- Algitaina Locality , the sample of the study is (30) teachers . The researcher as a teacher noticed that most of secondary schools students face problems in reading English language. In addition, the SPINE series is not enough to develop student's reading. In the lights of the findings the researcher recommends that teachers need to have regular training so as to be able to teach reading skill efficiently. Also teachers must use different techniques in teaching reading according to their student's level. Therefore, students should be provided with additional reading materials beside the text book to develop their reading skills. Secondary school students need much effort from the ministry of education and teachers. Students also need continuous support and encouragement.*

**Key words:** Sudan, secondary schools students, reading skill

### INTRODUCTION

The reading skill is one of the most essential skills in learning English language; it is defined from different writers in different ways, but Hildreth (1976:2), says:

"Reading is a mental process involving the interpretation of signs perceived through the sense organs. Interpreting print is a specific form of learned behavior which requires grasping meanings through associations which have been formed between oral experience and the printed sentence contractions like a phonograph record".

As the researcher said that reading skill is important and each writer takes it on his own way. Ross, (1988:2) says:

"Attempts to define reading have been numerous. This is partly because of the complexity of the reading skill, which includes two major components, a process and product, both are teachers need to be aware of these components, and of their different aspects in order to respond effectively to reading needs. In addition, they will find that familiarity with some theories related to the reading process and with important principles of teaching reading activities"

In the same topic of reading skill Hildreth (1976:3) also claims that other modes of communication have come and gone through the ages, but reading as a process of interpreting graphic symbols has endured because of its convenience and practicability.

## **VALUES OF READING**

No doubt that reading has great values in both general and specific sides and it will remain the key of knowledge;

Hildreth, (1976:3) states:

"of all the valuable skills, the average person learns in a life time the ability to read easily heads the list, because it is the most universal and the most generally useful for every one today".

At the end of the topic Hildreth (1976:3) also asks, why do the world's leaders attach so much importance to teaching every child to read and write? He answers because as it has been said

"The leading nations are reading nations, as Thomas Jefferson in one of his letters; people who read can be free because reading banishes ignorance and super stations".

According to the facts mentioned above it appears that reading has great importance in the nations' like.

## **DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF READING MATERIALS**

It is the teachers' role to follow some strategies to enable students avoid difficulties which face them in reading; Chastain, (1971:114) claims that students can't jump from reading above to total reading comprehension, they must progress through a series of increasingly different levels of reading materials. On the first level, they read materials in their own texts them an opportunity to encounter in context, the structure and vocabulary they have been studying. Most students don't have a great deal of difficulty with reading and understanding at this level, even though they may be unable to discuss the context in the second language.

In addition to the levels that must be followed in reading process, Chastain (1971:115) considers:

"in the developing of the reading skill, the danger that must be avoided is the almost universal practice of requiring students to read material that is linguistically too complicated for their level of language ability".

## **PRE-READING ACTIVITIES**

There are various things teachers can do before reading a text which will make it easier for students to understand the text and help them focus attention on it as they read.

Doff (1988:59) suggests some activities include:

### **a- Presenting new vocabulary**

Teachers do not need to present all the new words in a text before the students read it; they can guess the meaning of many

words from the context. An important part of reading is being able to guess the meaning of unknown words, and teachers can help students to develop their reading skills by giving them practice in this. Only the words which would make it very difficult to understand.

**b- Introducing the text:**

It is important to introduce the theme of the text before asking students to read it. This serves two purposes:

First, to help students in their reading, by giving them some idea in what to expect,

Second, to increase their interest and make them want to read the text. One way to introduce the text is just to give a simple sentence, a more interesting way would be to have a short discussion, to start students thinking about the topic, teachers shouldn't say too much when introducing a text, or they will 'give a way' what it has to say, and kill the students' interest instead of arousing it.

**c- Guiding questions:**

The third step that Doff (1988:59) discuss is Guiding questions, he says that before the students read the text, the teacher can give one or two guiding questions (either orally or written on the board), for students to think about as they read. So, to achieve their purposes, guiding questions should be concerned with the general meaning or with the most important points of a text, and not focus on minor details; they should be fairly easy to answer and not too long.

**TEACHING READING**

Teachers of English language must know that the important step in learning their students the English language is to teach them how to read, because if students know reading they will overcome all the difficulties of understanding.

According to Aukerman, (1981), that each facet of instruction in the reading program has its specific objective or objectives together, they all have one common objective which is comprehension, the ultimate reading skill. The word "comprehension" means the act or process of understanding the nature or meaning of something, the act or process of grasping with the mind; it is, then, a mental process.

Also Aukerman Clarifies comprehension in statement as:

"Comprehension is not as reading is not getting meaning from the printed page, there is no meaning on a printed page. There are only lines and curves that we call letters and form which we build words meaning resides not on the printed page, but in the mind of the student".

At the same topic, Aukerman (1981:71), states that this basic psychological truth should be kept constantly in teachers own mind as they go about teaching for reading comprehension. Many words do, of course, have generally accepted meanings, otherwise spoken and written communication of any kind would be impossible. But each student brings to some words that are based on his individual experience. The experiences of any two people in the whole world can never be a like, not even when experienced together!

In the same case Aukerman (1981:1) states: "The experience of all students are relatively limited. They can't yet know all that teacher do, they are grasping for new meaning that enable them to understand.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Secondary schools students face problems in developing reading skill. The researcher tries to discuss the main essential point that can help to find solutions and recommendations for developing students' reading skill.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This Study Aims to Achieve the Following Points

- a- To suggest some additional materials for developing students' reading skill.
- b- To recommend using some teaching methods and techniques to develop students' reading.

### **QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY**

- a- How can the secondary schools' students develop their reading skills?
- b- What are the methods of teaching that can help in teaching reading reading?

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

- a- Using addition materials beside the text book like literature can develop and support the reading skills of students.
- b- Using modern teaching approaches help students collecting and acquiring knowledge and ability to understanding.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

The study is based on descriptive analytical approach aims to develop Sudanese secondary schools students' reading skill as well as finding some support points to help students improve their reading skill.

### **INSTRUMENTS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher used a questionnaire to collect the data of this study. The questionnaire was distributed to (30) secondary schools teachers in the White Nile State- Algitaina locality.

### **TOOLS OF THE DATA ANALYSIS**

The researcher used Statistical Analytical Method and (SPSS) program to analyze the data of this study.

## RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

It is meant by the reliability of any test, to obtain the same results if the same measurement is used more than one time under the same conditions. In addition, the reliability means when a certain test was applied on a number of individuals and the marks of every one were counted, then the same test applied another time on the same group and the same marks were obtained; then we can describe this test as reliable. In addition, reliability is defined as the degree of the accuracy of the data that the test measures.

On the other hand, validity also is a measure used to identify the validity degree among the respondents according to their answers on certain criterion. The validity is counted by a number of methods, among them is the validity using the square root of the (reliability coefficient). The value of the reliability and the validity lies in the range between (0-1). The validity of the questionnaire is that the tool should measure the exact aim, which it has been designed for.

The researcher calculated the validity statistically using the following equation.

$$\text{Validity} = \sqrt{\text{reliability}}$$

The researcher calculated the reliability coefficient for the measurement, which was used in the questionnaire using (split-half) method. This methods stands on the principle of dividing the answers of the sample individuals into two parts , i.e items of the odd numbers e.g (1,3,5...) and the answers of the even numbers e.g( 2, 4, 6 ) then teachers correlation coefficient between the two parts is calculated\ . Finally, the (reliability coefficient) was calculated according to Spearman – Brown equation as the following:-

$$\text{Reliability Coefficient} = \frac{2 \times r}{1 + r}$$

r = Pearson correlation coefficient

For calculating the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire from the above equation, the researcher was distributed about (30) questionnaires to respondents. In addition, depending on the answers of the pre-test sample in the above Spearman – Brown equation was used to calculate the reliability coefficient using the split – half method; the results have been showed in the following table:

**Table (1) The statistical reliability and validity of the sample about the study questionnaire**

	<b>Reliability</b>	<b>Validity</b>
Over all Questionnaire	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.75</b>

It is noted from the data in the above table that all reliability and validity coefficient for sample individuals about teacher questionnaire's hypothesis, and for overall questionnaire, are greater than (50%). This indicates to the high validity and reliability of the answers, so the study questionnaire is valid and reliable, and that will give correct and acceptable statistical analysis.

Also the questionnaire validity was checked by long experienced teachers who gave comments on the questionnaire, and were considered by the researcher.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Hypotheses One:**

**Using addition materials beside the text book like literature can develop and support the reading skills of students.**



**Table (2) Frequency Distribution Table for Statement (1-4)**

No	Statements	Number & Percent				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Using additional materials beside the textbook develop reading skills.	20 66.7%	9 30.0%	1 3.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
2	The SPINE series is enough to develop student reading.	10 33.3%	9 30.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	11 36.7%
3	Teachers make use of techniques from different methods of teaching .	7 23.3%	14 46.7%	3 10.0%	5 16.7%	1 3.3%
4	Using supplementary reading materials makes the process of reading familiar to students.	10 33.3%	16 53.3%	1 3.3%	1 3.3%	2 6.7%

It is clear from table (2) in the first statement “using additional materials beside the text book develop reading skills” there are (20) respondents with percentage (66.7%) strongly agree on that, whereas (9) respondents with percentage (30.0%) agree, and only one respondent with percentage (3.3%) is not sure about that.

In statement “the SPINE series is enough to develop students reading” there are (11) respondents with percentage (36.7%) strongly disagree whereas (10) respondents with percentage (33.3%) strongly agree, and (9) respondents with percentage (30.0%) agree on that.

In statement “teachers make use of techniques from different methods of teaching” there are (14) respondents with percentage (46.7%) agree on that, whereas (7) respondents with percentage (23.3) strongly agree and (5) respondents with percentage (16.7%) disagree on that, and (3) respondents with percentage (10.0%) not sure about that, while only one respondent with percentage (3.3%) disagree on the statement.

In statement “using supplementary reading materials makes the process of reading familiar to students” there are (16) respondents with percentage (53.3%) agree on that whereas (10) respondents with percentage (33.3%) strongly agree, and (2) respondents with percentage (6.7%) strongly disagree,

whereas only one respondent with percentage (3.3%) disagree, and only one respondent not sure about that.

The above results of the four statements of the questionnaire correlate with first hypothesis **“Using additional material beside the textbook can develop and support the reading skills of students”**, Because most of the respondents agree and strongly agree with the statement. This indicates that the hypothesis is accepted and that text book is not enough to develop students' reading skill. Students need different materials to motivate them as well as helping them acquire new vocabulary.

**Hypotheses Two:**

**Using modern teaching approaches help students collecting and acquiring knowledge and ability to understanding.**

**Table (3) Frequency Distribution Table to Statements (5-8)**

No	Statements	Number & Percent				
		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5	The strategies used in the classroom helps students improve their reading.	12 40.0%	11 36.7%	0 0.0%	7 23.3%	0 0.0%
6	English teachers give less attention of the teaching of reading strategies.	3 10.0%	16 53.3%	1 3.3%	6 20.0%	4 13.3%
7	Teachers adopt principles of a certain method in teaching.	7 23.3%	15 50.0%	0 0.0%	5 16.7%	3 10.0%
8	Inside the classroom students are instructed to read the text silently.	10 33.3%	17 56.7%	1 3.3%	1 3.3%	1 3.3%

It's clear on table (3) in the statement “the strategies used in the classroom help students improve their reading” there are (12) respondents with percentage (40.0%) strongly agree, whereas (11) respondents with percentage (36.7%) agree on that, and (7) respondents with percentage (23.3%) disagree about that.

In the statement “English teachers give less attention of the teaching of reading strategies” there are (16) respondents with percentage (53.3%), whereas (6) respondents with percentage (20.0%) disagree about that and (4) respondents with percentage (13.3%) strongly disagree while (3) respondents with percentage (10.0%) strongly agree, and only one respondent is not sure.

In the statement “teachers adopt principles of certain methods in teaching” there are (15) respondents with percentage (50.0%) agree on that, and (7) respondents with percentage (23.3%) strongly agree while (5) with percentage (16.7%) disagree about that and (3) respondents with percentage (10.0%) strongly disagree about that.

In the statement “inside the classroom students are instructed to read the text silently” there are (7) respondents with percentage (56.7%) agree on that, and (10) respondents with percentage (33.3%) strongly agree and only one respondent with percentage (3.3%) not sure, also only one respondent disagree about that while only one respondent strongly disagree.

The result of the above statements of the questionnaire correlate with the second hypothesis “**Using modern teaching approach help students in collecting and acquiring knowledge and ability to understanding**” because most of the respondents agree on the statements. This indicates that the hypothesis is accepted. From the data above appeared that it is crucial to use modern teaching approaches to motivate students for good learning.

## **FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The analysis of the results led to the following findings

- 1- Using additional materials beside the text book can help in developing student's reading.

- 2- Applying the suitable strategies and techniques inside the classroom has a great role in developing student's reading.
- 3- Secondary schools' students need much effort so as to help them develop their reading skills.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The researcher recommends the following:

- 1- Teachers should adopt certain techniques that suit their student's level.
- 2- As reading is one of the most important skills of English language, there should be different teaching techniques for teaching this skill.
- 3- There should be additional training courses for teachers in teaching English language in general and reading skill in particular.
- 4- There should be a friendly interaction between the teachers and their students inside the classroom.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study is conducted under the title “ Developing Sudanese secondary schools students' reading skill” so the results of the study revealed that students need much effort so as to develop and improve their reading skill. Teachers also need to use different teaching techniques, in addition to using additional materials beside the textbook so as to motivate and encourage students to develop their reading skill. At the same time developing students' reading skill needs a comprehensive cooperation between Ministry of education and teachers so as to design a modern method for teaching reading skill.

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